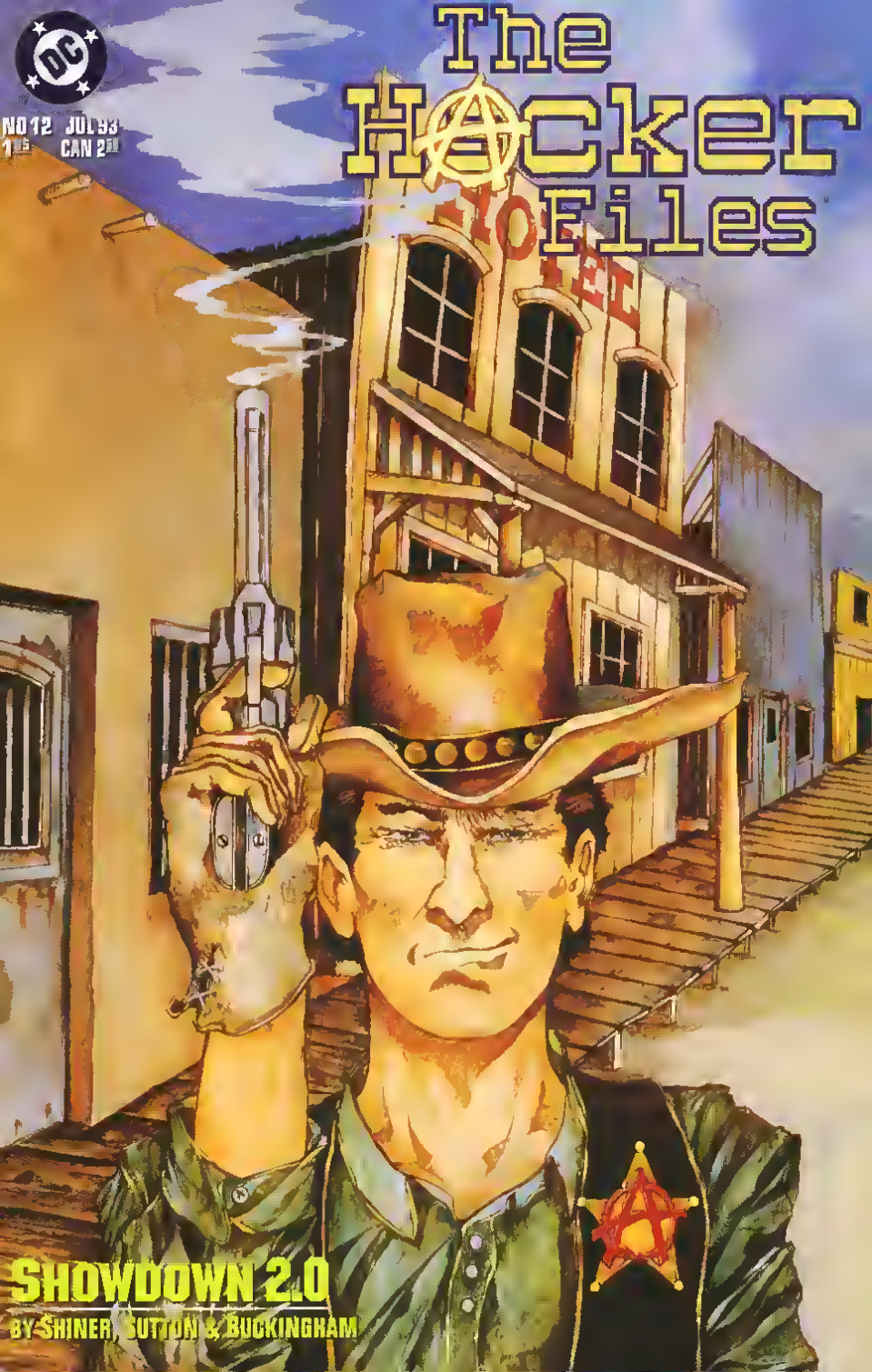
Oh PhaRO
#OCD on irc newnet
http://ocd.conforums.com


The Hacker Files
NO 12 JUL 93
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SHOWDOWN 2.0
BY SHINER, SUTTON & BUCKINGHAM

The Hacker Files
SHOWDOWN
It's all come down to THIS Digitronix has been using their computers--the ones I helped design--for ESPIONAGE
All the data is being fed to an ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE in that complex right down there
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Green Lantern and Flash came ahead on reconnoissance. Flash went in and didn't come OUT again
ANY SIGN OF FLASH?
NOTHING
UH OH
AMERICANS!
WE HAVE YOUR MAJOR AMERICAN SUPER CHARACTER, THE FLASH-MAN
WE HAVE PUT DRUGS IN HIM TO MAKE HIM SLEEP
GIVE US YOUR WORD TO LEAVE AND NOT RETURN AND WE RELEASE HIM TO YOU
OR ELSE WE WILL HAVE TO BE KILLING HIM WE GIVE YOU FIVE MINUTES

(UH... BACK INSIDE, WE'D BETTER THINK ABOUT THIS.)
HI, CATHERINE. DIDJA MISS ME?

WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED IN THERE?
NO BIG DEAL
I HAD A LITTLE ACCIDENT, BUT I CAME TO BEFORE THEY SHOT ME UP. I SPEEDED UP MY METABOLISM AND BURNED IT RIGHT OFF.
I'M STILL A LITTLE JUMPY, BUT...
WHAT?
I GIVE UP.
LOOK AROUND YOU.
I'D SAY OUR COVER WAS PRETTY WELL BLOWN, WOULDN'T YOU?
HEY, I'M SORRY.
YEAH, YEAH. JUST TELL ME WHAT YOU SAW IN THERE.

...SO THAT'S THE BASIC LAYOUT. THERE WAS ONE WEIRD THING.
THIS GUY IN LIKE A BIG HELMET AND WEIRD GLOVES WALKING ON A TREADMILL.
HERE
THAT MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU?
YEAH
THEY'RE USING VR AS AN INTERFACE TO THE A.I.
V.R.? A.I.?
VIRTUAL REALITY ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.
HACKER, YOU HAVE TO TAKE ME IN THERE WITH YOU
NO WAY, KID
HE'S RIGHT, JACK
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ALL THREE OF US SHOULD GO
DON'T FORGET I WROTE THE VIRUS THAT STARTED THIS

I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN. BELIEVE ME.
THEN LET ME FINISH IT.

THIS IS BETWEEN DIGITRONIX AND ME ALWAYS HAS BEEN
I'M GOING IN ALONE.
IT'S BIGGER THAN YOUR PRIVATE FEUD NOW IT'S GOING TO TAKE EVERY THING WE CAN DO.

CHILL OUT!
BOTH OF YOU

LISTEN TO YOU! YOU GUYS SOUND LIKE SOME STUPID BLACK-AND-WHITE MOVIE.
GO AHEAD AND LAUGH BUT IF YOU DON'T BACK OFF ON YOUR EGO YOU'RE GOING TO BLOW THIS
NOBODY WANTED TO SAY THIS TO YOU 'CAUSE WE ALL LIKE YOU BUT WE ALL KNOW IT
YOU'RE OLD, MAN
YOU'RE ALMOST FORTY. YOU'VE BEEN COASTING FOR TEN YEARS.
YOUR PROLOG IS CRUMMY. YOU CAN'T HANDLE ULTRA-LARGE SCALE INTEGRATION.
YOU'RE OVER YOUR HEAD.
SORRY
OKAY
WHEN YOU'RE RIGHT, YOU'RE RIGHT.
LET'S GO

YOU MIGHT WANT TO WAIT FOR ME, MARSHALL
WHY?
OKAY, GO STAND IN A CORNER OR SOMETHING. AND GET THAT SUIT OUT FROM UNDER THE HELMET
WHAT THE...?
COOL
MAYBE I SHOULD, LIKE, CHECK THIS OUT FIRST
SURE IF YOU WANT TO FIGHT MARSHALL FOR IT
JUST GET US SOME PRIVACY. THAT'S ALL I WANT.
YOU GOT IT.

MEANWHILE I'M GOING TO FINISH PULLING THE TEETH OF THAT VIRUS
HACKER, I WAS THINKING...
FORGET ABOUT IT
MAYBE I AM SOME KIND OF WASHED-UP OLD DINOSAUR. BUT SOMEWHERE IN THAT THING IS THE OPSYS I WROTE
NOBODY SAYS "OPSYS" ANYMORE
I DO.
AND I'M THE ONE GOING IN THERE

Never done this before.
PHREDDY has, of course.
Smartass kid.
I hate it when he's RIGHT.
Uh oh.
Here we go.
Whoa.
This I could get to LIKE.
Marshall...

Hello Sutcliffe. Seeing as how you're just a COMPUTER projection, I would have thought you'd lose a couple of CHINS
I'm NOT Walter Sutcliffe. I was merely programmed in his IMAGE. But then you KNOW that
You've got NERVE logging on under your own NAME
I'm RESPONSIBLE for you. At least a little. So its up to ME to shut you down
I created the Digitronix to take power AWAY from big corporations and give it to the INDIVIDUAL
How naive
The day of the individual is OVER. The CORPORATION is now the dominant life-form on the planet
There's simply no more room for the lower life forms—these precious "individuals" of yours—if they don't contribute
The homeless, the unemployed, the humanitarians
They'll soon be EXTINCT
Corporations have made their environment TOXIC. Only corporations can PROTECT them.
And we no longer CHOOSE to

NO!
I DON'T THINK HACKER'S DOING TOO WELL
HOW ARE YOU DOING WITH THE SECURITY?
EVERYTHING'S COOL. I THINK THAT BUSINESS WITH THE FLASH RATTLED THEM SO BAD THEY DIDN'T NOTICE WHEN WE MELTED THE WALL
I'M FEEDING THEM PHONY DATA NOW IN ANY CASE
GOOD. I'M JUST ABOUT RECOMPILED HERE ANOTHER COUPLE MINUTES
MAYBE WE'RE ACTUALLY GOING TO PULL THIS OFF.
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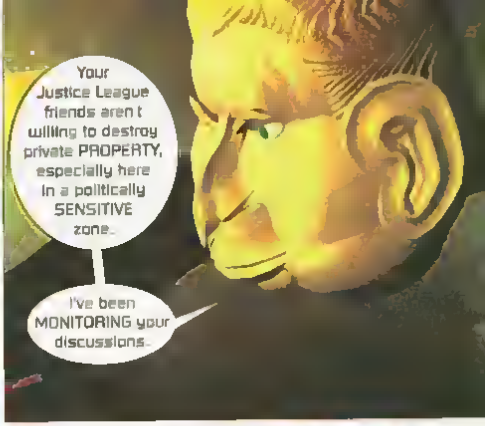
I'm going to take you DOWN
How?


Your Justice League friends aren't willing to destroy private PROPERTY, especially here in a politically SENSITIVE zone.
I've been MONITORING your discussions.

The computers at their HEADQUARTERS.
It's like having a million EARS. One for every Digitronix on the PLANET.

Cute.
But I've got a TRICK or two of my OWN

SNAP
Run "Code of the West."

What are you DOING?

Where did this COME from?
toon

It's a little something of my OWN. You LIKE it?
In fact it's hardwired into EVERY Digitronix machine.
I used to be a little OBSESSIVE about this game. I wanted to be sure I could play it wherever I went.

Lets make a deal
You want me off the SYSTEM right?
Only you can't ERASE me
You can't delate ANY human operator while their PROGRAM is running
No
I can't
Okay
So we play my game.
If I lose I'll be automatically ERASED and I promise not to coma back
What's in it for you? You can't BEAT me
That's MY lookout
FRRIPPPPPP
No LISTEN to me I can't LOSE I've looked up every way there is to lose this game and I've PROGRAMMED mysalf not to fall into ANY of them

Cattle stampede
RRRRRRUMBL
Not very IMPRESSIVE, Marshall You'll have to do better
Come on Marshall you're wasting valuable TIME and MONEY
Let's get this OVER with
Saloon
Okay but we have to do it right Showdown on main street

WHITE FLAG. TRUCE. I WANT TO TALK
HE'S CLEAN. IT'S UP TO YOU. I'LL LET HIM IN IF YOU WANT.
YEAH, OKAY BUT WATCH HIM.
WE'RE IN OVER OUR HEADS ON THIS. WE KNOW IT WE NEED HELP.
THIS THING, THIS A I... AT FIRST WE DID IT JUST BECAUSE WE COULD. IT WASN'T AERSONAL. DATA ISN'T PERSONAL, IT'S JUST... DATA. IT'S LIKE MONEY
MORE MONEY IS ALWAYS BETTER. THAT'S WHAT I USED TO BELIEVE... BUT IF YOU TAKE THAT AS FAR AS YOU CAN, YOU END UP WITH...

MAIN STREET
THAT THING IN THERE
DID YOU KNOW IT LOOKS LIKE ME?
I ADMIT IT THAT MUCH POWER MADE ME CRAZY BUT ONCE YOU GET STARTED THERE'S NO WAY TO END IT
DON'T WORRY WE'LL END IT FOR YOU
IF YOU CAN PUT A STOP TO IT. REALLY FINISH IT, WITHOUT DESTROYING OUR HARDWARE...
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
JUST THIS I WON'T HELP YOU--I'VE STILL GOT A CAREER TO THINK ABOUT
BUT IF YOU CAN STOP THAT THING...
I WON'T STAND IN YOUR WAY

After YOU, Alphonse
Get ON with it, Marshall

"Say yo pwayuhs, you wascal wabbit"

I don't know what you think you're PLAYING at...

...but it's OVER.
BOOW
I win
Not ...exactly...
What the hell is THAT supposed to mean?
There's a million ways to END the game by losing...but NONE to end it by WINNING.
And since you CAN'T lose...
...you're going to be here a LONG time.

SO YOU CAN PROMISE ME NO PRISON TIME? AND DIGITRONIX STAYS AFLOAT?
WE WON'T INTERFERE--EXCEPT WE WOULD WANT SOMEONE WE TRUST INSIDE THE COMPANY
AS LONG AS IT'S NOT MARSHALL
I DON'T TRUST MARSHALL I WAS THINKING MORE OF YOSHIO
SURE, WHY NOT? THE CONNECTIONS THE VIRUS MADE ARE GONE I CAN MAKE SURE THEY STAY THAT WAY
YOU WILL, OF COURSE, MODIFY YOUR HARDWARE DESIGN TO REMOVE THE SURVEILLANCE CAPABILITY
OF COURSE
WHICH LEAVES ONLY THE QUESTION OF THE A.I.
IT'S TAKEN CARE OF
NO DAMAGE TO THE SOFTWARE, BUT IT'S OUT OF COMMISSION
TELL ME YOU'RE NOT MAKING A DEAL WITH THESE CREEPS
IT'S NOT YOUR CALL, MARSHALL.

IF YOU'LL COME BACK TO LONDON WITH US WE'LL DRAFT UP AN AGREEMENT.
MY PLANE OR YOURS?
YOU REALLY THINK YOU COULD TEACH RALPH TO PROGRAM?
ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE, MAN
And so it ENDS...
...in compromise and BETRAYAL, just the way it BEGAN.
For a while there, I thought I'd actually LEARNED something.
That maybe FRIENDSHIP was the only thing that really counted.
What the hell I've been WRONG before
JACK? WHAT'S THE DEAL, GUY? EVERYBODY'S WAITING ON YOU.
WAS IT WORTH IT? EVERYTHING WE WENT THROUGH? THE VIRUS, SUE IN JAIL? CHINA? THIS?

WHO CARES? WE DID WHAT WE HAD TO
SUTCLIFFE'S FINISHED AT DIGI-TRONIX. I'LL PROBABLY GET HIS JOB
IT'S AS CLOSE TO A HAPPY ENDING AS YOU'RE GOING TO GET IN IN THE REAL WORLD
SO COME ON.
LET'S SEE WHAT IT'S GOING TO TAKE TO GET A TACO AROUND HERE
Saloon
Howdy, Sheriff. Pull up a CHAIR.
Sheriff?
Why NOT?
Deal the CARDS, boys...
...I feel LUCKY tonight